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SUBSTANCE
OF THE
S P E E C H E S
OF
Eden (W)
LORD AUCKLAND,
IN THE
HOUSE OF LORDS,
MAY 16th and 23d, 1800;
IN SUPPORT OF
THE BILL
FOR THE
PUNISHMENT AND MORE EFFECTUAL PREVENTION OF
THE CRIME OF ADULTERY.

LONDON:
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1800.

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HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, May 16, 1800.

LORD AUCKLAND stated, that as it was intended to propose great and important additions to the Bill which stood committed for that day, he had been induced to form the whole into a new Bill, that it might pass through all the stages of Parliamentary discussion. He accordingly presented a Bill, intituled, "An Act for the Punishment and more effectual Prevention of the Crime of Adultery." On his motion to appoint a day for the second reading, a long debate took place. Towards the close of that debate Lord Auckland spoke in support of the Bill; and again on the third reading (May 23d). In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, the substance of the arguments which he offered on those occasions is here given in one connected Speech.

(2)

SUBSTANCE
OF
LORD AUCKLAND'S SPEECH,
&c. &c.

MY LORDS,

IT was my earnest wish to have avoided, on this day, the discussion of a subject so foreign to that which at the moment engrosses our minds. I can hardly hope to engage your attention, I shall with difficulty command my own, under the recent impressions of a danger which has struck us all with horror, and from which the infinite goodness of God's providence has alone preserved us. But the speeches which you have heard compel me to offer some observations in support of a proposition introduced by

by me with every appearance of your general wish and sanction, though I am now to encounter a resistance which comes from quarters where I least expected to find it; and which I the more regret, as being certainly respectable in rank, character, number, and ability.

Your Lordships well remember that, some weeks ago, a Noble Baron was pleased to move you to rescind a standing order which you had made in 1798, for the purpose of preventing collusion and connivance in cases of Parliamentary divorce. It happened to me, among many, to differ on that occasion from the Noble Baron, with whom, on most other subjects, I have been proud to agree. I was led by the course of the debate to remark, that, though much benefit had already been derived from the standing order which my Noble Friend proposed to rescind, the practice with respect to Parliamentary divorces was become grossly and scandalously objectionable. And I incidentally expressed a doubt, to which I have long inclined, whether, in cases of legislative divorce, the intermarriage

of the offending parties ought not to be prohibited. I farther observed, that the Acts of Parliament which have been construed to authorize such intermarriages had originally purported to relieve the injured husband only; that to this day they are so worded; and that they had always been so considered till towards the beginning of the present century. And surely, my Lords, it cannot be reconciled to the dictates of justice, morality, or religion, that an adulterer and an adultress shall be deemed entitled to a special interference of the Legislature in their favour, and to a suspension of the ordinary course of law, in order to enable them to complete a contract founded in turpitude:—in other words, that a woman who has violated a solemn vow, made by a solemn appeal to her Creator, shall be authorized by you to exhibit a mockery of Heaven, by a new profanation of the same ceremony with the convicted partner of her crime.

I was not surpris'd, my Lords, to find that these sentiments, which naturally presented themselves

selves to me, were sanctioned at the moment by
 your general and warm approbation : they were
 consonant to the principles of sound morality
 and pure religion, which will always have a due
 influence on your Lordships' minds. You were
 pleased to express your wish that I should bring
 forward some measure to restrain and correct the
 practice to which I had alluded ; and that wish
 seemed to have the general concurrence of the
 House, including even some of the present op-
 posers of the Bill now in debate.

Wherefore, my Lords, do I recall these par-
 ticulars ? Not to aid myself by the impression
 and weight of personal authorities, however re-
 spectable they may be. I rely entirely on the
 weight of truth, and on the impression of reason.
 But I am desirous to shew, that I have not had
 the arrogance to originate a proposition of such
 magnitude ; I introduced it only in consequence
 of an intimation from you, equivalent in my
 judgment to an order.

Nor

Nor is it this provision alone which I may assert to have been in fact the measure of the House. My Noble and Learned Friend who prepared the additional clauses, was in like manner instructed and guided by your apparent wish and general approbation.

Even the first suggestion was not mine; I am, indeed, every hour more convinced of its expediency and solidity, but I have not the merit of it.

A Bill to prevent the intermarriage of offending parties (and with a clause also to prohibit the adultres, during a limited period, from contracting any marriage whatever) was proposed nearly thirty years ago by the Duke of Atholl:—it was rejected by a small majority in the House of Commons; and the rejection was followed by a great and rapid increase of Divorce Bills. The Duke of Atholl's proposition was again tried in 1779, by a Right Reverend Prelate of high respectability:—it was again negatived in the House of Commons, by a division of 51 to 40. In both instances it

went through this House, not merely without opposition, but with general concurrence.

And here, my Lords, allow me to advert to a consideration which, in the course of the five last weeks, has often presented itself to my mind. Certainly it is no flattery to the persons who now hear me, to say, that there exists within these walls as much collective wisdom, as much right intention, and as much individual goodness and true honour, as have been seen in the councils of any nation, either in present times or in past history.

Contemplating this House, and the Members who compose it, in such a point of view, and with all the advantages of cultivated education, all the acquirements of Parliamentary knowledge, and all the habits and practice of reasoning; I have often asked myself how it can happen that a body of men so constituted can exhibit a great schism and diversity of opinions respecting a question dependant on the evident and immutable principles of justice, morality, and religion.

Again,

Again, my Lords, how can it have happened that this House, which in 1771 and in 1779 passed without one dissentient voice, and without any contrariety of opinions, a Bill containing all the provisions now under discussion, and even going beyond them, should in 1800 debate those provisions with an earnestness and warmth beyond any instance that I recollect in a Parliamentary experience of twenty-six years ?

It would ill become me to deny that the same rectitude of intention which distinguishes the supporters of the Bill, equally guides the conduct of its opposers. Their conduct is not to be ascribed to any undue desire to prevent the establishment of new and necessary barriers against vice. On the other hand, the support given to the Bill, must not be attributed to a motive of an opposite nature, and hardly less reprehensible ; I mean an overweening zeal of reform, and a disposition to do more than existing circumstances demand. The diversity of our opinions arises solely from a grave and solid doubt, whether the Bill pro-

posed will eventually discourage an offence which we all equally wish to discourage.

When I say existing circumstances, I do not allude to the increasing applications for Divorce Bills, though, in point of fact, that increase is great and alarming.

It appears in our Journals, that from the date of the Bill "to enable Lord Roos to marry again," a period of one hundred and thirty years, there have been one hundred and thirty-two divorces by Acts of Parliament; of which number there were only eight in the first forty-five years, fifty in the next sixty years, and seventy-four in the last twenty-five years. In the four years immediately preceding this Session there were twenty-nine Divorce Bills, exclusive of five which were rejected; and in the last Session alone there were ten, exclusive of two which were rejected.

It may possibly be answered, that the increased number of Parliamentary divorces proves only an increased facility (which in itself, however, is a
great

great reproach to us) in the means of obtaining them. And in support of this I may be told, that, in former periods of our history, the crime of adultery was more prevalent than it is at present. My Lords, I will not condescend to combat an argument which is unsound in its foundation. The mere statement implies, that, provided the average of vices be not increased, we ought to leave them to their free operation. The question is not, whether the immorality of this year is greater or less than in any former year, but whether there now exists a criminal practice, which has a natural and necessary tendency to increase the depravation of manners; and whether that practice is open to salutary correction and discouragement, by provisions not in themselves liable to solid objections.

But I by no means rest the necessity of the present Bill on the glaring and offensive increase of Parliamentary divorces. I do not even rest it on the representation so eloquently made to you by my Noble and Learned Friend, on the part of the highest legal authorities, all concurring in an
 opinion,

opinion, that the prevalence of adultery is become a dangerous and scandalous evil, calling loudly for some restriction and remedy, more especially with respect to those collusions by which the criminal parties derive gratifications and worldly interests from the result of crimes.

Still there are other grounds on which the expediency of this Bill may well be defended : I allude, my Lords, to circumstances evident to all who can turn their eyes with a fair and unprejudiced attention towards the known system and scenery of modern societies. I allude to circumstances which may be imperceptible to the visual nerves of a chosen few, and no euphrasy or rue that I can administer, will bring the object within their contemplation.

The nature of these circumstances, and the relaxation of mind and morals which accompanies them, is forcibly and beautifully described by one of our poets, in a passage so singularly applicable to the present discussion, that I beg leave to avail myself of it ;

" Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
 Of Paradise that has surviv'd the fall!
 Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown;
 Till prostitution elbows us aside
 In all our crowded streets; and Senates seem
 Conven'd for purposes of empire less,
 Than to relieve th' adulteress from her bond.
 Th' adulteress! what a theme for angry verse!
 What provocation to th' indignant heart
 That feels for injur'd love! But I disdain
 The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
 Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame!
 No.—Let her pass, and chariotted along
 In guilty splendour, shake the public ways;
 And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
 Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd,
 And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
 Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time,
 Not to be pass'd. And she that had renounc'd
 Her sex's honour, was renounc'd herself
 By all that priz'd it; not for prud'ry's sake
 But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
 'T was hard perhaps on here and there a wif,
 Desirous to return and not receiv'd,
 But was an wholesome rigour in the main,
 And taught th' unblemish'd to preserve with care
 That purity, whose loss is loss of all.

Men

Men too were nice in honour in those days,
 And judg'd offenders well.—But now, yes, now,
 We are become so candid and so fair,
 So lib'ral in construction, and so rich
 In Christian charity, (good-natur'd age !)
 That they are safe : sinners of either sex
 Transgress what laws they may *.”

When I recollect all the exertions which within these few years have done so much honour to the wisdom and public spirit of this House, and have contributed so essentially to the public security and prosperity, I cannot allow myself to suppose that we even seem to meet in this place not so much for the great concerns of the Empire as for the nauseous and disgusting purpose of Divorce Bills. Still, however, and in point of fact, it happened to your Lordships in the last Session to be specially summoned for those purposes near forty times in the order of your proceeding on twelve Bills of Divorce.

Justly also might the poet inveigh against that
 “ liberality of construction” with which women

* Cowper's Task, Book III.

of untainted virtue and character are encouraged to speak of adultery and its consequences; forgetting the dignity and delicacy of their sex in the unprincipled jargon of well-bred vice, and in masculine and unblushing allusions to libertinism and crime.

But the jargon of the day, though in itself a symptom of increasing depravity, has no possible influence on the enlightened minds of those who now hear me. Convinced as I am that doubts respecting the expediency of the Bill are the sole cause of our difference, I wish to bring those doubts to a short and fair examination.

I do not however feel myself called upon to defend the clauses which provide for the punishment of the seducer. The objections made to them have been so few and so indefinite, that I consider that part of the Bill as almost unanimously adopted. And certainly though opinions may vary as to the mode of prosecution, the nature of the punishment to be applied, and the parties to whom prosecution and punishment should be restricted

or extended, it is not easy to argue that a crime subversive of morality and religion, and of the good order, happiness, and rights of civil society, shall not be subject to our criminal jurisprudence. I dismiss therefore this part of the Bill, after thanking the Noble and Learned Lord who prepared it, for the great and lasting benefit which he has conferred on his country. I ought also to thank the opposers of the Bill, to whom the merit of originating the clauses alluded to exclusively belongs. They called loudly for those clauses, and we have listened to their call. Indeed I had hoped that this material addition to the Bill would have suspended all opposition, and that the punishment of the seducer would have been received as compensating and justifying the restraint imposed on the seduced. Unhappily the wish still prevails to reject what I believe to be the most material part of the Bill, and to leave the adulteress not only without punishment, but to facilitate to her the means of marrying the convicted partner of her adultery.

And

And here, my Lords, before I examine the arguments by which the propriety of such marriages has been recommended to us, allow me to advert to a doubt which has been started respecting their legality.

It is one of the Canons Ecclesiastical of 1603, and a law still in force, that in all sentences of divorce *à thoro et mensâ*, “bond shall be given
“by the parties so separated, that they shall not,
“during the life of each other, contract matrimony with any other person.”

It is equally well known, that Parliamentary Bills of Divorce, though they purport to dissolve the marriage in general terms, confine to the injured husband only the authority given to contract a new marriage; making it lawful “for
“him to marry again, and declaring that the
“children born in *such* matrimony shall be legitimate.” There is no similar provision for the future marriage of the divorced wife.

It seems more than probable that in the early instances of these divorces, it was not supposed or adverted to, that the permission to contract a new marriage could extend to the adultress. But the subsequent and long acquiescence seems to have established such marriages, or at least to entitle them to be established if any doubt should arise respecting their validity. It is indeed difficult to understand how a marriage can be dissolved as to one of the parties, without being equally dissolved as to the other. And I would rather conclude that Divorce Bills, as now worded, though purporting to relieve only the injured party, are a complete dissolution of the marriage; of which dissolution the adultress may legally avail herself unless restrained by some general Act, or by some special clause. By a general Act, I mean the provision now under discussion, or the law precisely to this point which has prevailed in Scotland ever since 1604, and under which the crime of adultery is certainly less frequent in that part of the kingdom than in this. By a special clause I mean the proviso which it
will

will be in the power of either House of Parliament, by a standing order or by habitual practice, to declare and insist shall be annexed to Divorce Bills, if the measure now proposed should not pass into law.

And now, my Lords, I come to the clauses which alone are disputed, and to which the epithet "abominable" continues to be applied; though not indeed with peculiar propriety, or with due respect towards ourselves. It ought to have been recollected, that on the second reading of the Bill which contained those clauses only, the House divided in the proportion of nearly three to one in favour of the Bill, and that the majority united characters most respectable and exemplary in the best virtues of private life, in the administration of the laws of the land, and in the duties and practice of our religion. But I am not solicitous to advert to vague and ill-applied epithets; more especially when argumentative objections have come from the same quarter, and have been urged with fairness, ability, and eloquence.

The

The leading and principal objection seems to be, that, by restraining the intermarriage of the offending parties, the woman is put out of the protection of the only man to whom she can look up to preserve her from degradation and infamy; and that she is placed in the alternative between celibacy and libertinism. Some Noble Lords have been pleased to add, that she is thereby forced into a state of prostitution.

Is it then a conclusion to be avowed, admitted, tolerated, and sanctioned, in plain and coarse English, that whenever a woman shall think proper to prefer another man to her husband, your Lordships, the hereditary guardians of the welfare and well-being of the people, are to contaminate the trust reposed in you, and to say to such a woman—"Your plea is, or at least such is the plea of your officious defenders, that if you may not be permitted to form a second contract with the man by whose seduction you have broken your first contract, you must naturally and necessarily abandon yourself to prostitution. Your plea is most unprincipled;

“ unprincipled; your passions are most de-
 “ praved; but you shall be gratified. You have
 “ broken a sacred and solemn vow, made in the
 “ presence of your family and friends; but we
 “ will enable you, by a legislative act of ours, to
 “ go back unblushingly to the altar, which you
 “ ought to approach with agony and horror.
 “ Come again to us as soon as you shall feel
 “ disposed to quit this second husband, and to
 “ take a third: we shall be ready *toties quoties* *
 “ to authorize you to change the partners of
 “ your iniquity.”—My Lords, if the claim may
 not fairly be carried to this extent, it is false and
 good for nothing. The mere statement is so dis-
 gusting in every point of view, and is so degrad-
 ing to the sex which ought to be the object of
 our just pride and affectionate protection, that I
 shall quit it without farther remark.

I must however again and again remind your
 Lordships that this struggle is not made for any

* *Quæ nubit toties, non nubit; adultera lege est.*

Offendor machâ simpliciore minus.

MARTILA, VI. 7.

system of remedial law, indiscriminately applicable to the community at large; but for the opulent class of adulterers and adultresses, who; by the expensive nature of the proceeding, are alone implicated in Divorce Bills: and this partial dispensation is still farther confined in most cases to individuals who have the least claim to any indulgence.

Let us suppose that a woman shall have betrayed the best of husbands; that she shall have broken and destroyed his happiness; and shall have brought dishonour and distress into his family; a woman without excuse or palliation for her misconduct! Such a woman is sure to have the benefit of our special interference, because we cannot hesitate to give relief to her injured husband, and she is allowed to avail herself of the terms in which that relief is given.

But take the other case! Let us suppose that there are many circumstances of extenuation; that the unfortunate female has been made to live amidst scenes of debauchery and profligacy;

gacy; that her husband has connived with her seducer; that he has sold her person; that he has driven her from his house and protection. Such a husband cannot obtain a Divorce Bill (at least our "liberality of construction," our "Christian charity," do not yet go quite so far). In this case, the woman, though hardly criminal, has no relief, but wanders an outcast from society, to be laughed at by the gay and splendid adulterers, whose aggravated guilt shall have secured to her the means of marrying her seducer.

I protest, my Lords, that this whole proceeding is so repugnant to my feelings, and at the same time so absurd, that I listen with astonishment to those who defend it. I see no grounds on which it rests, except on an unprincipled claim to favour a certain class of society; to "fashion wickedness by law;" and to elevate crime into contract. And all this (in the instances especially where the crime is attended with the greatest aggravation) contrary both to moral principle and to the practice of other nations from the remotest antiquity to the pre-

sent time; contrary to the express law of another part of the kingdom at this day; and even contrary to our own subsisting law: for all the arguments used respecting the alternative in which the woman is said to be placed, apply as strongly against divorces *à thoro et mensâ*, as they do against the restrictions in the Bill which we are debating.

This is not a question to be decided by sentiments of indiscriminate compassion. Hard indeed must be the heart which can be insensible to the distresses of a woman, whatever may be the cause. But in looking with an eye of pity to the sufferings of a criminal, it is a paramount duty to look also to the tendency of the crime and to the necessity of example. We must not tamper with the essential principles of social order.

It has been urged however, that in several instances the intermarriages to which I object have been followed by a course of life well entitled, in every point of view, to esteem and respect.

My

My Lords, I know, and I admit, that such cases have occurred within the observation of us all: but I know, also, that a wise Legislature will not wish to form and multiply a sect of individuals, whose fall and subsequent rise in the estimation of mankind can tend only to give a false estimate of principles. Unfortunately, it would be a sect not content with the exclusive enjoyment of the privileges which itself had obtained, but, like other sects, would be naturally active in multiplying the number of its proselytes. It would consist of persons, the elegance of whose manners, and whose attractive habits of life, would be well calculated to fascinate and corrupt the pure minds of others, and to create an opinion that there is something worthy of indulgence and admiration in the practices and consequences of a steady, grave, and well regulated adultery. It would be actively and necessarily at work to subvert every sentiment of conjugal fidelity and female chastity, and would corrode and extend itself like a cancer over the fair bosom of civil society.

My Lords, I feel anxious to resist any imputation of rigour. God forbid that we should adopt the harsh laws of other countries. The Mosaic law directed, that “ both the adulterer “ and adultress should surely be put to death.” And the same severity extended itself over Asia and Europe through many centuries. The punishment of adultery by the Roman law varied at different periods, but was frequently capital. In the Digest there are provisions similar to the clauses which we are debating. The strictness observed on this subject by our ancestors the Germans is well and forcibly described by Tacitus *. But these investigations serve only to shew

* *Ergo septâ pudicitia agunt, nullis spectaculorum illecebris, nullis conviviorum irritationibus corruptæ. — Paucissima in tam numerosâ gente adulteria, quorum pœna præsens, et maritis permessa. — Publicatæ enim pudicitie nulla venia: non formâ non ætate, non opibus maritum invenerit. Nemo illic vitia ridet: nec corrumpere et corrumpi, sæculum vocatur.*

De MOR. GERM. c. 15.

Tacitus, who was of the consular rank, alludes here, and with just indignation, to the vices of the higher ranks; and to their affectation of justifying habitual outrages to decency as

shew the mildness of the system which we are pursuing; it is not even proposed by this Bill, as at present constituted, that the female offender should be subject to any punishment. All doubtful provisions have been avoided; and therefore also the question has been left for future consideration, whether the means either of prosecution or of divorce should be given to the injured wife.

I have omitted to state a dilemma to those who object to the clauses in question. Will they go so far as to argue, that in all cases of adultery it is right and expedient to facilitate, or even (as some have said by way of sarcasm and epigram) to compel the intermarriage of the offending parties? The easy interchange of wives prevailed during two or three years in

as being the fashion and *ton* of the day, "*corrumperet et corrumpi sæculum vocatur.*" He felt with his cotemporary Juvenal, who had exclaimed:

Kelocius ac citius nos

Corrumpunt vitiorum exempla domestica, magnis

Cum subeunt animos auctoribus.

SAT. XIV.

that

that distracted country, whose terrible example we have had before our eyes; and it became no exaggeration to assert, that the ceremony of marriage resembled the intercourse of "brute beasts which have no understanding." There is not an individual in this House, whose mind will not revolt against any propositions of such a tendency.

Is it then the wish to take the other branch of the dilemma, to confine Divorce Bills within the present bounds, and to give permission of intermarriage between offending parties to the opulent only? My Lords, this is a position which will not bear the light; it becomes a code of adultery for a privileged cast; it holds out, in many cases, to the adulteress the means of acquiring a great advance in rank and property by her crimes. In the place of contrition we see triumphant and barefaced vice. The compassion of all moral men changes, to indignation when such things happen.

Having disposed of the adulteress, let us now

turn to her seducer. " With respect to him," say the Noble Lords, " the clauses in question " cannot fail to operate as a premium and encouragement to adultery. You release him " from his bond, when you refuse to release " the adultress from hers. You release him " from an honourable obligation, the foreknowledge of which now deters and restrains " him." What then is the nature of that supposed obligation, by virtue of which, in the event of detection, or in cases of bargain or collusion, the adulterer is to come to this Bar by counsel for the adultress, to act the part of a defendant smarting under penal damages, in order to forward the Divorce Bill, which is to enable him to marry the adultress, and honourably to share her dishonour? The mere statement of the question shews the corrupt nature of the transaction, which is weakly defended by unsound reasonings resulting from unsound principles.

As to the abandoned seducers, and those who seek only to multiply the victims of their profligacy,

fligacy, I will rather trust to the chastisement of law than to the influence of fashion. But admitting that there may exist in the breast of others that anomalous sort of honour which is here adduced, that non-descript plant in the pleasure-garden of modern morality, I should infer, that a man possessing sentiments which have a relish of honour, would rather be deterred than encouraged by the reflection, that he can no longer make any reparation. Is it not this hopelessness of marriage, the honourable necessity of which is not extended by the fashion or practice of "this good-natured age" to the seducers of unmarried women; is it not this very hopelessness of all reparation which continues to make seductions so rare in that class of life, in which the seductions of married women are so frequent?

But I cannot comprehend the sort of honour which would be influenced by the obligation contended for, and yet would proceed coolly and deliberately to debauch a married woman; to entail a sense of shame on her innocent children;

dren; to deprive them of their natural protection; to give offence and disgust to society; to rob a friend of his happiness; and to destroy the fair pride and domestic peace of a whole family.

I cannot comprehend this strange casuistry, this sophistry of sin, as applied either to the woman, to whom the Noble Lords wish to secure the means of deriving benefit from her crime; or to her seducer, who is to be discouraged by the implied obligation which I have thus analyzed. In favour of such doctrines I cannot, with my incompetent knowledge of the world, frame any argument which would not tend to bewilder my own understanding, and the understanding of others, in a vain endeavour to palliate vice and to countenance the vicious. It is a sort of threatening letter in behalf of crime, when we are informed, that, unless the seduced and seducer shall be permitted to have their vices of the precise colour and tint which they prefer, we must expect them to commit vices of a deeper dye and enormity. We can-

not compromise with wickedness ; all morality would be thrown off its hinges, if such arguments could be used with effect ; they are of a nature to undermine the whole fabric of justice with respect to every crime that can be committed.

But the new clauses which I have this day introduced, will furnish the best answer to those who are apprehensive that the Bill may operate as an encouragement to adultery.

When your honourable men of gallantry shall have perused these clauses with attention ; when they shall have well considered the impending prosecution and its consequences ; when they shall see, fairly balanced, the different parts of the Bill ; I do not believe that they will feel themselves encouraged.

My Lords, I really am ashamed to have dwelt so long upon a subject which is so clear and so plain in all its views and bearings. I have done so from respect for those from whom I differ. I
have

have no want of a right charity in favour of the infirmities of our nature; on the other hand, I have no pretensions to enforce against those infirmities any strictness of correction beyond what is equally wished by the Noble Lords who oppose me. We differ only as to the means, and the necessity of employing them. I have little confidence in the accuracy of my own opinions; but certainly on this occasion I derive great confidence from the support with which I am honoured, and of which I should be unworthy, if I did not exert myself in a cause so supported.

I now leave the Bill to its fate, but with an opinion deeply rooted in my mind, that, if it should not ultimately be adopted, a severe and serious wound will be given to the good order and well being of society. And let me not be told by those who oppose the Bill, that I have placed them in a dilemma between the acceptance of a law which they disapprove, and the resulting encouragement of a crime which they

abhor. I have repeatedly explained that the subject of this Bill (which I support because I think it right, though it did not originate with me) was first brought into discussion by those whose arguments I have endeavoured to answer. Such is the wisdom of Parliament, such are the right feelings of the public at large, that whatever may be proper to be done will be done at last; though temporary misconceptions may prevail. And here I submit the whole to that venerable Bench whose duty it is to maintain the purity of religion; to the great and learned Characters whose duty it is to maintain the purity of law; and to your Lordships in general, who are interested and disposed to maintain the purity of married life, and of domestic happiness.

I shall conclude with only one more observation. The awful history of the crimes of France, which have deluged Europe with blood and calamity; the awful events which every month, and almost every day, now produces (and to one of which the proceedings of this very day
bear

bear a most solemn testimony), have taught us all, in our gratitude to that Providence which has protected this Island, to look more than we had been accustomed to do, into the recesses of our own minds. And I am sure that there is not one amongst us who has not felt the necessity of contributing by his example to the good order and morality of the people at large.

It had long been the object of the French writers, it is at this day the object of the German Theatre, to give fascinating portraits of adultery, in order to corrupt the institution of marriage; to confound all consanguinity, ranks, and descents; and to destroy that respect for parents which is essential to good education:—and all this to realize the diabolical dream of general fraternity and equality!

Happily, however, the visionary scheme of modern philanthropy, which would have levelled and classed mankind with the beasts of the field, is now seen in all its folly and deformity; and in this wise, and good, and happy country,

has served only to awaken the public mind. There now exists among us a due sense of the essential importance of that morality, which happily, in our days, enlightens and adorns the Throne; and which it is the salutary purpose of this Bill to guard and to promote.

THE END.

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